Living Worthy Lives (Part 2)

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[0:00] Music We've been looking at various qualities concerning our conduct.

! When we talk about conduct, that's something that's external. And concerning our godliness, and that's internal.
And last week we examined the eternal perspective, internal peace, practical purity, and faithful proclamation.
And tonight we're going to examine the final three qualities, beginning with doctrinal perceptiveness.
And I'm going to be in 2 Peter 3. And I'll read to you the second part of verse 15 through verse 17.
[1:19] Just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard, lest you, having been carried away by the error of unprincipled men, fall from your own steadfastness.
So the apostle Peter begins this final portion of our study with the phrase, just as also.
Peter has been doing this in both of the books that bear his name. And by doing that, he's issuing a warning. He's issuing a warning by quoting warnings from the apostle Paul.
It's a good man to quote. And Paul gave warnings against false teachers.
[3:07] Everywhere he went, there were false teachers. Peter was saying, there were false teachers. All over the part of Asia Minor that he visited, all around Israel. And Peter not only refers to Paul as his fellow apostle, which he was, clearly, but he also refers to him as our beloved brother.

Peter. Peter. And both Peter and Paul shared in the ministry of bringing the message of Christ to a dying world.
And ministers today that are serious and good are bringing messages concerning Christ to a dying world.
It's still dying. Through their writings, that message has been shared and is still being shared around the globe.
These men understood the message they had been commissioned to bring to the world. These were the foremost leaders of the early church, particularly Peter and Paul.
[4:39] Peter was present at the birth of the church in the book of Acts. He was there.

And then later, he and Paul showed up at the same meeting referred to as the Jerusalem Council.
You can read about that in the book of Acts chapter 15. It was at the council that the debate was held exactly what is it that the new church should be doing concerning what could best be described as joint worship.
worship of both Jewish converts and new converts out of the ranks of the Gentiles that were coming into the fellowship.
And there were some serious questions that came up. Not the least of which was, can they worship and serve together?
[6:02] Well, I hope so. It would be good if they could. Now, we're not going to exhaust the teachings of the Jerusalem Council.

Might make a good study someday. And we're not going to exhaust that, at least not this evening.
Prior to the council, the prevailing attitude was that to be saved, a person had to be incorporated into the nation of Israel.
Basically, you had to become a Jew, and only then could you become a Christian and follow Christ.

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That wasn't God's plan at all. But that was the prevailing thought in those days. And the two greatest Jews in that time period were unquestionably both Peter and Paul.
Of course, Paul hasn't always been Paul, has he? Remember he was Saul? Remember he was the leader at the execution, if you will, of Stephen, called the first church martyr?
[7:31] Read about that in the 8th chapter of the book of Acts. But they were the great Jews of their day. And there was much discussion held in the Jerusalem Council.

And Peter and Paul came down and said, and they really prevailed in this. When they spoke, you paid attention. And they said, yes.
Jews and Gentiles can worship and serve together. Now that was startling to some of those in attendance, and a revolutionary idea.
But by taking that stand, the church was on a firm foundation. They really couldn't risk taking any other stand than that one.
But that bore some fruit in a way. I think we could call it fruit. Taking that position that Jews and Gentiles are one and can worship together.
[8:49] That was a major setback for the false teachers of that day. They didn't like that.

They didn't like it at all. Now, false teachers and false teaching brought great harm to the church. It always has. Until the Lord comes back for His true church, they always will. They bring harm to the church in our day.
But both Paul and Peter were instrumental in rejecting the teaching of the false teachers that so prevailed in their day.
And it still prevails in ours. There's a lot of false teaching going on around the world. And you could see a lot of those guys on television. And pretty much the same message.
[9:59] And you could catch them on TV or on the way to the bank. But it is extremely prevalent false teaching in our day.

Peter appealed to those that were around him. And they said, you've got a great resource together for you. Go to this resource.
Study the letters of the Apostle Paul. And in them you will find support for what Peter believed in doctrinal perceptiveness.
study Paul's letters. Because everywhere he went he had to deal with false teachers. They beat him. They might have even killed him one time.
We don't know for sure. But Paul spoke often about the return of Christ. The very topic that the Apostle Peter acknowledged.
[11:15] Peter was the first to acknowledge when we speak of the return of Christ. Peter would say there were some things in there that are difficult to understand.

We should study even in our day. But it doesn't mean that it's easy. But remember Peter dealt primarily with the return of Christ when he would physically land on the Mount of Olives.
Peter lifted up to the Apostle Paul to write about some of the more difficult things to understand. Paul wrote about the rapture of the church.
Peter really did. Paul did. He wrote about the coming of the man of sin that would be revealed. He talked about the glories of heaven and other topics. Other topics. Now false teachers did not limit their attacks merely upon the last days.
[12:40] And that's why Peter called these false teachers he had a favorite phrase these are unprincipled men. They launched attacks on justification by faith divine election eternal security and so forth.

Great topics that Paul talked about particularly in Romans 8, 9, and 10. Paul wrote frequently of those.
And Peter and Paul both said this be on guard stand watch and if Peter and Paul were here today I promise you first of all I would sit down and they would get up here and say be on guard you're under attack by false teachers.
They would warn us of that. I've had the privilege of traveling all over the world. I've been in I think 47 countries 48 if you count Louisiana and but at least 47 countries and I'm telling you the attacks overseas are intense.
Europe by that I mean Western Europe Western Europe the lights have gone out. It's dark.
[14:20] It's dark. You know the interesting thing? You know where the lights are on around the world? The persecuted church.

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The church under severe persecution. I spent hours this week at VOM but the church is under intense attack.
We see it every day at VOM. We get reports in every day. There's so much we can learn from these men and the false teachers seized on these topics and of course they like to attack the Word of God.
And of course the way you do that you distort it. You distort it. And they were good at that. And they described Paul's teachings as difficult.
Didn't mean it was impossible. But there was so much to learn from Paul for the teachings of the end times. And dare I say it, there's much to learn from the Old Testament prophets.
[15:31] The book of Daniel was what Daniel wrote about? Iran. He didn't call it that. He called it Persia.

It's Iran. They wrote about that. It's a great book. So be on guard. Well let's talk for a few minutes about spiritual progress.
2 Peter chapter 3 first part of verse 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
That's pretty good advice man. You want something to study in the Word of God? Read about Jesus. Study about Jesus.
Jesus. That's how you grow in grace and in knowledge. And Peter has a solution for falling prey to false teachers and false prophets.
[16:41] And may I say that his solution has met the test of time down through the ages. Has met the test of time.

What is the secret to spiritual success? We all want that. We all want it for ourselves. We want it for our wives. We want it for our children and our families.
What's the secret? Pursue Christ. We're getting ready to go be with him for eternity. Pursue Christ. or as Peter put it, pursue Christ likeness. Be like Jesus. Every morning when you wake up, I would suggest you a simple prayer.
Simple prayer. Lord, at the end of this day, may I be more like Jesus when this day began.
[17:54] Amen. Amen means so be it. Strive to be more like Jesus. And every believer should strive daily in the pursuit of Christ and in spiritual growth.

life. This is how the Apostle Paul put it. And he was addressing that great church that we studied and will study again someday, the Lord willing.
The Ephesian church. This is what Paul had to say in Ephesians chapter 4 verses 14 to 16. we don't want to any longer be children tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.
We don't want to be carried about by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming, but speaking the truth in love we're to grow up in all aspects unto Him who is the head and we know who that is don't we?
That's the Lord Jesus from whom the whole body being joined and held together by what every joint supplies according to the properly measured working of each individual part causes the growth of the body for the building of itself in love.
[19:40] Ephesians 4 14-16 We are commanded there to grow spiritual growth.

It uses a Greek word meaning to advance and to increase in the sphere of. Well, how are we to do this?
We are to grow in grace. We do that by growing following the plan of Peter. We listen to the words of Paul and then apply Peter.
We do so by growing in grace through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. because of God's grace the Lord forgives the sins of his children.
Consider some of these passages here. This is out of Romans chapter 3. Great chapter in the word of God. Romans chapter 3.
[20:45] I'm going to begin in verse 21. But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested.

It's been revealed. Being witnessed by the law and by the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all those who believe, for there is no distinction.
We're all the same. How? All of sin and fall short of the glory of God. How are we the same?

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Being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. whom God displayed publicly.
When did you do that? On the cross. As a propitiation. That's the atoning sacrifice.
[22:01] In his blood through faith for a demonstration of his righteousness because in the forbearance of God he passed over the sins previously committed for the demonstration of his righteousness at the present time so that he would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3, 21 to 26. I love those words. God is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Christ Jesus.
Here's another passage to chew on. Ephesians 1, 7. Remember the first 19 verses of Ephesians are all one sentence. There's one period if it's been properly spelled out.
in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our transgressions according to the riches of his grace.
In Ephesians chapter 2 verses 4 to 10 very familiar to all of you I'm sure. but God being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our transgressions made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.
[24:20] And here's where we fly with the angels. For by grace you have been saved. through faith. And this is not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God. Not of works so that no one may boast. There's no boasting. No room for boasting.
For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
Here's a great passage of Scripture concerning salvation. We believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in the same way as they also are.
Acts 15 11. again that's part of the Jerusalem council back in Acts. Paul and Barnabas were addressing the Jerusalem council and this is what they said and all the multitude kept silent and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.
[26:01] I'll tell you how amazing this passage of Scripture is. The Jews on the Jerusalem council did not even know that Gentiles could be saved but now they learned that Gentiles are saved the same way they are.

by grace in God found in Christ Jesus and both sets were amazed. Same salvation.
When we studied 1 Peter we read these words! Therefore laying aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander like newborn babies long for the pure milk of the word so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.
if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. Brothers, it takes knowledge and a deep understanding of who Christ is and what He intends to accomplish to defend ourselves and the church against false doctrine and spiritual deception.
Peter makes great strides in defending Christ and what he intends to do in these last days. Peter refers to Jesus as both Lord and Savior.
[27:51] This has to do with His saving work and with His Lordship. It's not surprising that defending the Lordship of Christ shows up in commentaries written by John MacArthur.

I've got all His New Testament commentaries. In my opinion, unless we see Him as both Savior and Lord, we will not know Him in fullness.
You've got to see Him in both. And then finally, a few words about continual praise. 1 Peter chapter 3, the second part of verse 18.
To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. Here we arrive at the concluding remark of the study of 2 Peter.
chapter 3. It's not unusual for the author of Scripture, the Spirit of God, to close a book with a doxology.
[29:12] A doxology is a method of giving praise to God Almighty, to giving praise to the God of the universe.

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doxology. It's a way of inscribing glory to Him. Doxologies are a call to believers to enter into worship and to offer adoration to God.
The thought that we will praise Him is consistent with now and with eternity. That's what we're going to be doing, praising Him. I had a good friend of mine, a minister of the gospel.
Thank goodness he moved to Oregon. I'm in a study one day and he says, you know, if all we're going to do in heaven is praise Jesus, that's going to be boring.
I should have just got up and walked out. It's the most exciting thought you could have. Doxologies are a way of inscribing glory to Him.
[30:25] They're called to worship. And the thought that we will praise Him is consistent with now and with eternity.

I love to read the fifth and sixth chapters of the book of Revelation because there we hear worship. We hear worship. They're filled with praise.
Of course, the Psalms are a book of praise. You can pick up the Psalm, leave it lay in every room of your house and open it up.
You'll be praising. Peter wants to make sure just who we are praising.
It is Him. meaning it is Him meaning the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter spent time in his books writing about the return of the Lord Jesus.
[31:32] When we started this study, I couldn't guarantee anyone that the Lord would not return before our study was completed. I still can't. And we're just a couple sentences away from the end.

brothers, live your lives with the knowledge that the Lord could be back in our lifetime.
If He's not, I'm not going to be disappointed with that much closer. Living on a farm where I'm at, I can see for quite a ways I like to look up at the sky and under the words perhaps today.
The great M.R. DeHaan, Dr. DeHaan, and I say doctor, both a physician and a minister of theology, he had on his desk a plaque, perhaps today.
And that's in a museum now in Michigan, that original plaque, perhaps today. live your lives with the knowledge that the Lord could be back in your lifetime.
[32:56] He could also choose to delay. And He's really not delaying, He's going to come right on time. I like the former thought.

I think Paul did too. Listen to Colossians chapter 3 verses 1 to 4. Therefore, and remember why there is for you?
You've got to figure out what there is for. Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above.
That's where Christ is. Seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth.
For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God. when Christ who is our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him except you'll be in His glory, enveloped in the glory of Christ Jesus.
[34:21] And what a day that will be when that happens. brothers, let me offer a prayer this evening.

Almighty and most gracious God, before whom every man must one day appear before this great God and give an account for the deeds done in the body.
we know, Lord, that you're going to return. You promised us, and you never broke a promise.
Lord, may we be leaders of our families, of our wives, of our children and grandchildren, of our brothers and sisters, our friends, with a certain knowledge that one day, Christ is going to return.
I have close family members that don't believe that, they don't want that, and they reject that.
[35:38] But what a day that will be for those who believe. And until that time, Lord, may we occupy with those things which you have set out before us, and may we share the good news with our neighbors, our friends, our co-workers, even our enemies.

They all need to hear. Be with us, Lord, as we journey home. bring us back full of joy and grace and the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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